

## Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 OES-05 PC-05 USIA-15 IO-10 INR-07

DODE-00 AGR-10 INT-05 COME-00 FDRE-00 EB-07 IGA-01

EUR-12 /143 W

----- 093508

P R 191155Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2472

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BANJUL 0394

AFDROUGHT

E O 11652: NA

SUBJ: SPECIAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON SAHEL DROUGHT RECOVERY

REF : STATE 112399

1. IN RESPONDING TO GOTG ACTIVITY PROPOSALS, AID OFFICER HAS PLACED EMPHASIS UPON ACTIVITIES WHICH (1) WILL ASSIST IN MITIGATING EFFECTS OF RESURGENCE OF RECENT DROUGHT AND (2) WILL CONTRIBUTE TO RECOVERY SO AS TO HELP ESTABLISH A BASE FOR LONGER RUN DEVELOPMENT. WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THEREFORE, AID OFFICER PREFERS TO WORK IN TANDEM WITH OTHER DONORS TO PICK UP A PIECE OF THE ACTION THAT ANOTHER DONOR CANNOT FOR SOME REASON UNDERTAKE. THIS PERMITS FASTER UTILIZATION OF AND GREATER MILEAGE FOR AID R/R DOLLAR. SECOND OPERATING PRINCIPLE IS TO JOIN WITH AN ACTIVITY THAT GOTG HAS ALREADY BEGUN WITH OR WITHOUT OTHER DONOR ASSISTANCE BUT WHICH REQUIRES SHORT-TERM AID INPUT TO HELP KEEP A PROMISING ACTIVITY FROM FALTERING OR TO PROVIDE THAT LITTLE EXTRA BOOST TO GET SOMETHING MOVING. FOREGOING, OF COURSE, MUST OPERATE WITHIN PARAMETERS OF SAHEL R/R MANDATE AND DIRECTIONS PRESCRIBED BY 1974 FAA.

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2. ACTIVITY NO 635-234-III-A (AND 635-234-II-A) IS AN

EXAMPLE ON AID S PROVIDING A INSTANCE TO AN ON-GOING ACTIVITY IN ORDER TO HELP KEEP PROMISING PROJECT FROM FALTERING. THIS ACTIVITY WAS BEGUN AS A GOTG PILOT SCHEME IN 1971-72, AND ITS INITIAL ENCOURAGING RESULTS LED TO INTER-NATIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH FREEDOM FROM HUNGER CAMPAIGN OF FAO. DUTCH AID AGENCY, NORVIB, UNDERWROTE FIRST FFHC CONTRIBUTION IN 1972-73. SCHEME INVOLVED CULTIVATION OF ONIONS DURING SLACK TIME IN AGRICULTURAL CYCLE. AS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED, IT MEETS SEVERAL COMPLIMENTARY OBJECTIVES:

(1) IT HELPS USE AGRICULTURAL CYCLE EFFICIENTLY AND THUS HELPS INCREASE RURAL INCOME AT A TIME OF YEAR WHEN THERE IS LITTLE OR NO FARMER INCOME.

(2) IT HELPS GOTG FURTHER ITS STATED POLICY TO DIVERSIFY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AWAY FROM OVERWHELMING DEPENDENCE UPON A SINGLE EXPORT CASH CROP, GROUNDNUTS, AND TOWARDS A POPULAR FOOD CROP OF HIGH NUTRITIOUS VALUE, ONIONS. IN THIS WAY AN EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE ROLE OF HORTICULTURAL FOOD CROPS AS A CASH CROP AND TO HELP MOVE FOOD CROPS INTO MONETIZED ECONOMY. FOOD CROPS TRADITIONALLY HAVE BEEN FOR LOCALIZED SUBSISTENCE ONLY.

(3) COOPERATIVE INSTINCTS IN LOCAL VILLAGES ARE REINFORCED. LOCAL WOMENS AUXILIARIES HAVE BEEN FORMED AT SOME 80 SITES TO HANDLE CULTIVATION OF CROP. ROLE OF WOMEN IS CENTRAL IN THIS ACTIVITY. WOMEN ARE THUS IN POSITION TO CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO CASH INCOME OF THEIR FAMILIES AT CRITICAL TIME OF YEAR.

(4) ONIONS ARE SO POPULAR IN THE GAMBIA THAT ANNUAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE COST FOR THEIR IMPORTATION IS SIGNIFICANT. ORGANIZED SUBSTITUTION BY LOCAL ONIONS WILL HELP REDUCE DRAIN ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES.

(5) ONIONS ARE ENVISAGED AS FIRST OF SEVERAL VEGETABLE CROPS TO BE GROWN IN SCHEMES. THE GAMBIA, FOR NO GOOD AGRICULTURAL OR CLIMATIC REASONS, IS A VEGETABLE-DEFICIENT COUNTRY. GREATER DOMESTIC SOURCES OF VEGETABLES WILL HELP IMPROVE LOCAL DIET AND NUTRITION.

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3. TO DATE SCHEMES HAVE PRODUCED ENOUGH ONIONS. PROBLEM AROSE ON STORAGE AND MARKETING SIDE. LAST YEAR LARGE NUMBERS OF ONIONS ROTTED FOR WANT OF ADEQUATE STORAGE AWAY FROM SEASONAL RAINS. SAME PROBLEM WAS IN WIND FOR THIS YEAR'S HARVEST WHICH IS DUE OFF FIELDS IN MAY-JUNE. TWO ACTIONS WERE REQUIRED BOTH FOR IMMEDIATE RESCUE AND SLIGHTLY LONGER TERM. FIRST, AID SAHEL R/R FUNDS WERE COMMITTED FOR CONSTRUCTION

WITH LOCAL MATERIALS OF MORE THAN 20 DIVISIONAL STORES TO SERVE AS TEMPORARY HOLDING CENTERS AWAY FROM RAINS WHICH NORMALLY BEGIN IN LATTER HALF OF JUNE. THESE ARE APPROACHING COMPLETION. IN ADDITION, AID IS FINANCING IMPORTATION OF A PORTABLE PREFABRICATED STORAGE CELL TO BE LOCATED CENTRALLY NEAR CAPITAL WHERE LARGEST MARKET IS. THIS WILL PERMIT CONTROLLED STORAGE OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME IN ORDER TO RATIONALIZE SUPPLYING OF RETAIL MARKET. THIRD. AID IS SUPPLYING ON A ONE-TIME BASIS MODEST REVOLVING FUND TO PERMIT INITIAL PURCHASE OF CROP; TO BE RECYCLED IN FUTURE YEARS. A MAJOR GOTG PROBLEM IS SEVERE STRINGENCY IN RECURRENT BUDGET, SO LOCAL FUNDS CANNOT BE FOUND ON SHORT NOTICE. FOURTH, AID IS CONSIDERING FINANCING CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF PERMANENT VEGETABLE STORAGE FACILITY AT CENTRAL SITE. AID'S CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE LIMITED TO MATERIALS AND LABOR FOR BUILDING WHILE OTHER DONORS, INCLUDING NORVIB AND IBRD, ARE ANTICIPATING FUNDING MACHINERY AND MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE. ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE IS TO MOVE AWAY FROM A SUBSIDIZED GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY TO A COMMERCIALLY VIABLE ENTERPRISE. THIS TAKES TIME AND THE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF SEVERAL DONORS.

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EUR-12 /143 W

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P R 191219Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1113

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BANJUL 0394

AFDROUGHT

4. ACTIVITY NO 635-390-I-C IS AN EXAMPLE OF AID'S PROVIDING ASSISTANCE THAT HELPS GET BENEFITS OF OTHER DONORS' ACTIVITIES TO TARGET GAMBIA SOONER. PECULIAR GEOGRAPHY OF THE

GAMBIA AND DROUGHT HAVE COMBINED TO MAKE MEAT AT ANY PRICE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN FOR AVERAGE GAMBIAN. DROUGHT ELSEWHERE IN SAHEL RESULTED IN LARGE INFLUX OF CATTLE INTO COUNTRY PUTTING PRESSURE ON ALREADY OVERTAXED GRAZING PASTURAGE AND WATERHOLES. NATIONAL HERD MUST BE REDUCED BY ABOUT 30 PER CENT FROM CURRENT ESTIMATED POPULATION OF 270,000 HEAD. FEW CATTLE DIED OF THIRST DIRECTLY, BUT OVERCROWDING LED TO DISEASE AND MALNUTRITION WHICH IN TURN RAISED DEATH RATE.

5. GOTG ESTABLISHED A CATTLE MARKETING BOARD COORDINATING ITS EFFORTS ON CATTLE MARKETING. GOAL IS TO PROVIDE ENOUGH MEAT AT REASONABLE PRICE THEREBY IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL AND LIVING STANDARDS OF POPULATION; TO DESTOCK DROUGHT-STRICKEN AREAS THUS REDUCING STRESS ON CATTLE REMAINING IN THESE AREAS; AND TO HELP INTEGRATE CATTLE MARKETING INTO MONETIZED ECONOMY THUS GIVING RURAL CATTLE-DEPENDENT GAMBIAIS AN ADDITIONAL CASH INCOME. TWO CONSTRAINTS EXIST, TRANSPORT AND PRICE. GOTG HAS RAISED OFFICIAL PRICE SO THAT IT IS NO LONGER A CLEAR DISINCENTIVE TO SELL CATTLE. ON TRANSPORT SIDE, GEOGRAPHICAL PECULIARITIES OF COUNTRY GOVERN. AID IS SUPPLEMENTING CMB  
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FLEET OF CATTLE TRUCKS. UK IS COMMITTING ITSELF TO SUPPLY A BARGE/LANDING CRAFT CONSTRUCTED IN BRITAIN SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR RIVER TRANSPORT OF CATTLE. THIS WILL MAKE USE OF COUNTRY'S GREATEST UNTAPPED RESOURCE, GAMBIA RIVER. BRITISH INDUSTRY CANNOT SUPPLY ENGINE SOON, SO AID IS PLANNING TO SUPPLY IT FROM AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS. IN THIS WAY TWO DONORS ARE COMBINING EFFORTS TO GET RESULTS TO GAMBIAIS MUCH FASTER THAN EITHER COULD DO ALONE. BRITISH, MOREOVER, ARE COMMITTED TO REFURBISHING AND EXPANDING BANJUL ABATTOIR WHICH BARGE AND TWO TRUCKS ALREADY IN COUNTRY WOULD SUPPLY. AID-FINANCED TRUCKS WILL SERVICE BARGE AND RETAIL BUTCHERS. IN THIS WAY ENTIRE COUNTRY CAN BE EFFICIENTLY COVERED RELATIVELY SOON. IBRD FOR ITS PART IS CONSIDERING LARGE LIVESTOCK COMPONENT IN PHASE II OF IBRD AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT LOAN NOW BEING DESIGNED, SO AID'S INPUT IS PART OF A SHORT-TERM COOPERATIVE RESPONSE WHICH WILL HELP BUILD A BASE FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

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